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## EDITORIAL NOTES

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The usual school curriculum is a misfit. Much of the material proposed cannot be presented properly, and much that is presented the youthful mind is in no condition to apperceive.

**Waste in Teaching** In organization and arrangement it does not correspond to the natural processes of thinking, and it fails to stimulate and nourish mind-growth. There is, on this account, indefinite waste in the work of teaching.

The operations of nature often follow the path of a circle with a recurrence in cycles. The stalk of corn takes up from the soil small quantities of materials which, after serving their purpose, are returned to the earth again, and the process is repeated in endless generations and cycles of vegetation.

The educative process, too, when complete, follows the path of a circle, and in some respects the growth of the human being is like that of the plant. But there is a difference—an important difference. In the plant the materials are organized into complex compounds, which in time become separated and reduced to the simple and original forms. At every stage of the process the transformations deal with materials, and nothing but materials. But in human growth, in the transformations of the materials which minister to it there is a by-product in the shape of a spiritual output that at once lifts the development of a human being above the growth of a vegetable.

**Educative Process a Circle**

**Spiritual By-Product**

It is this spiritual by-product of material transformations that is the chief concern of the teacher; and the trouble is that nobody is able to understand it. The lime, the carbon, and the water, having performed their function in the corn, passively return to earth and air, leaving no trace behind. But in the human being there is accompanying these changes a spiritual output that may be good or may be bad—it will never be neutral and passive. It is here that the teacher finds his problem. It is his special business to see that the uncertainties that are ordinarily involved in

the spiritual result become certainties in the direction of righteousness.

Toward this end comparatively little has been accomplished. Some of our philosophers have turned pessimists and given it up.

**Outcome of Education Uncertain** The most diabolic and fiendishly artistic crimes are frequently perpetrated by those who were long treated in childhood and youth with the educational process as it is commonly practiced. It seems that not only a little learning, but also a great deal, is often a most dangerous thing. Somewhere in the educational process there is a break, a lapse; something is overlooked; something is left out.

Looking at the educational process under the similitude of a circle, there are several things needed to make it complete. The omission of any one of these will make the spirit of

**Parts of the Educational Process** man a wanderer upon the face of the earth, and open up to it all the possibilities of villainies that detract and defile.

Upon one part of the circle that describes the educative process lies the environment of the learner. This includes everything that is capable of producing any kind of an impression through any or all of the senses. This part the schools in the past have much neglected. The face of the scholar was turned from the face of nature. All the machinery of the school was devoted to strengthening this attitude. But the situation is improving. Through object-lessons, and nature-study, and in countless other ways, the pupil is placed in direct touch with the influences of his surroundings.

**Environment**

At another point on the circle is the individual himself. It is his function to transform the impressions received through the senses into a spiritual product. It is the sole office

**The Individual** of the teacher, it is the chief business of method, to see that the impressions are so marshaled that the spiritual outcome shall be certain. Without this there is no education. Upon this point, too, the schools have been ignorant and indifferent. So long as the children were compelled to deal with symbols and empty formulas that possessed little significance for them, the impressions were faint and the spiritual result was weak. But the pupils are now in close touch with practically all

matters—physical and intellectual—that can influence a human being, and the spiritual product is robust. This is due to two things: to the substitution of interesting material for empty forms and symbols, and to improved and more skilful methods of presentation.

Up to this time almost the whole emphasis in school-teaching, from infancy to maturity, has been placed and still is placed upon these two phases of instruction. Science with its field-work and laboratories, and history in its work of excavation and research, are but emphasizing the importance of concrete and interesting material as a basis for instruction. Departments of education in normal schools, colleges, and universities express the importance that now attaches to philosophic and skilful methods. Yet, in the face of all this, the world is still half afraid of the educated product. Nobody knows just what it will do; we appear to be no more sure that it will be upright than we were when educational schemes were less elaborate. College and university men may be found who contribute to the general welfare—they may be found also tangled up in all sorts of nefarious schemes. Hence the public is hesitating, doubtful, and half-afraid of education.

It is evident that the educative process is not complete; the circle is not entirely closed. The only thing that can ever make education safe is to have the spiritual output, the by-product of those physical transformations of the living body, immediately enter as an influence for good into the environment which was the source of the original impressions. At present the school does not do this. It assumes that the spiritual result will some time later beneficently affect the environment; and in many cases it does; but it is largely a matter of chance, and our education is therefore not scientific. Character is not assured until the spiritual product has made itself felt in the uplift of the surroundings which gave it birth.

Here is the vitally, fatally weak spot in the schools. While they are furnishing an increasing number of opportunities through material and method for the pupils to derive ideas from their surroundings, they by no means furnish adequate or corresponding opportunities for them to work their impulses back into their surroundings again.

**The Proper  
Emphasis in  
Education**

**Education  
Made Safe**

**Weak Spot in  
the Schools**

A man looks out over a plague-smitten city; from what he sees he forms an idea—a spiritual product—as to what should be done. He plans a system of drainage and other measures which finally dispel the pestilence, and his surroundings are left upon a higher plane than that on which he found them. The new generation begins where his work ended and repeats the process; thus through generation after generation in endless cycles the elevation of the race proceeds.

In this illustration there is the perfect type of the educative process. The man not only blesses his city; he at the same time educates himself—constructs character. Nobody doubts him, nobody fears him; everyone knows just what he will do. He is the only type of a citizen that is absolutely safe, and but few of such appear in each generation. “By their *fruits* ye shall know them.” The schools are almost wholly lacking in opportunities and means by which the pupil can make this beneficent connection with his environment. He has no means by which he can close the circle, and his spiritual product, his impulses, waste themselves away in the ether. No human being was ever educated by such a process.

Slowly are the schools waking up to this fact. By almost imperceptible degrees the pupils are allowed to exercise the means by which they may work their ideas out in their surroundings. This is the real meaning of all the forms of art, and of hand-work, that are gradually finding place in the curriculum. They are not there merely to make the fingers nimble, any more than the object is introduced simply to render the senses alert. It is their immediate purpose to afford the pupil a direct means of putting himself, his spiritual output, as a living impulse, into his environment that he may uplift it. When pupils are *all* trained in this part of the educative process, there is every reason to believe that *all* of them will become educated; that *all* of them will become safe and reliable citizens. It is the final step, the closing of the circle through the individual’s reaction upon his environment, that actually assures character. The various forms of handwork are admirably adapted to this end. Domestic sci-

**Educative**

**Process**

**Illustrated**

**Meaning of  
Hand-work**

**Educating all  
the Children**

ence lies at the foundation of the health and happiness of the race. Its glaring need is evident everywhere. In this subject the pupils have the fullest opportunity of putting into immediate operation, for the benefit of all concerned, every lesson that is learned.

Through the artistic and industrial aspects of clay-modeling, woodwork, metal-work, textiles, sewing, bookbinding, printing, drawing, painting and design, no home and no school need be without work that is both useful and beautiful. Early ideas of taste in matters pertaining to dress and decoration exert constantly a powerful influence in the development of character. All of these activities meet the growing demand for finer adaptations and more delicate adjustments, that materials may be used with greater economy, more artistic effect, and for a more exalted purpose.

These occupations in the school are intended to close the gap that ordinarily exists in the circle—in the educative process—  
**Function of the Occupations** between the individual and his environment. It is they that finally root in the human being the elements of character. There is no doubt what a man or woman so trained will do. He can be trusted to make things better, and through the making to become a stronger and finer character himself.

It is this part of the educative process that calls for original and creative work of the highest type. Imitation will not answer; for the environment is to be changed, made better, and new ways and means must be devised. It turns education from a copying process into one of original research. It insures a re-examination of the motive at every step, that the highest ends may be sought and attained. Through the continual search into the needs of his surroundings, the moral sense of the individual is immeasurably quickened, and the motive itself in time becomes firmly established. It is then, and not until then, that the right type of citizenship is assured.

W. S. J.